

# Portland Friends Meeting Newsletter

Ninth Month, 2014

**Meeting for Worship:** Sundays 10:30a

**First Day School:** 2nd & 4th Sundays 10:45a

## Connections

### Co-Clerks

Sarah Cushman 841-7186

Andy Grannell 878-8698

### Treasurer, Contributions

Sue Nelson 391-6116

60 Shadagee Road, #2

Saco, ME 04072

### Treasurer, Operating Account

Kathy Beach 741-2940

14 Drew Road

South Portland 04106

### Treasurer, Special Funds

Sara Jane Elliot 749-9706

### Special Needs Funds

Chris Beach 741-2940

Elizabeth Szatkowski 772-1774

### Ministry and Counsel

Stephanie Richards 829-4082

Lyn Ballou 865-3888

### Pastoral Care Coordinators

Shannon O'Connor 774-2578

Christina Davis, 518-0784

### Religious Education

Adults: Sandra Jensen, 839-2372

Youth: Susan Lavigne, 775-0626

Youth Religious Education Coordinator:

Anne Payson 781-2501

### Use of the Meetinghouse

Jane Mullen 761-5856

### E-group Coordinator

Mary Beth Walsh 797-8414

[mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com](mailto:mbwalsh@mainelyaccess.com)

### Newsletter

electronic submissions

Heather Denkmire

[pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net)

### postal mail submissions

Liz Maier

274 Black Point Rd.

Scarborough, ME 04074

### address change details

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[tscilipoti@maine.rr.com](mailto:tscilipoti@maine.rr.com)



1837 Forest Ave Portland, ME 04103

[portlandfriendsmeeting.org](http://portlandfriendsmeeting.org)

## Query: *Do I recognize when I have enough?*

*(2014 New England Yearly Meeting, Interim Faith and Practice,  
Individual Experiences with Advices and Queries)*

## Calendar

**September 21, rise of meeting:** Meeting Pot Luck with FWCC

**September 28, 10:45a:** First Day School resumes  
**rise of meeting:** celebration of new members

**October 5:** World Quaker Day

**November 1, 9-3:** Falmouth Quarter Meeting at Durham Friends

**October 25-26:** All-Meeting Retreat, Alfred, ME

## Monthly Events

### Every Sunday:

10:30a Meeting for worship (for all ages)

### Every Wednesday:

5:30p Meeting for worship

### 2nd & 4th Sundays:

10:30a children in Meeting for worship

10:45a First Day School

### 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th Sundays:

10:00a all ages singing before worship

### 2nd Saturday:

5-8p Youngish adults potluck

Jock Carter [jockel.carter@presumpscott.com](mailto:jockel.carter@presumpscott.com)

### 4th Friday:

3:30-7p Preble Street Soup Kitchen

Aaiyn Foster 766-9762



**Portland Friends Meeting for Business  
September 7, 2014**

Portland Friends Meeting for Business began in silent worship with 30 members and attenders present. During worship, Co-Clerk Sarah Cushman read a passage from Individual Experiences with Advices and Queries from the Interim Faith & Practice:

*C. Wess Daniels visited a meeting where he found printed queries on the benches.*

I was impacted by these spiritually directed questions this past week when I purchased a new/used bike for my commute. As I was trying to customize the bike to fit my needs I continued to battle the desire to really trick it out, add some of the really nice (i.e., expensive) parts to it to make it extra sweet. One query kept running through my head though, prompting me to wait and consider the choices I was about to make.

*Do I recognize when I have enough?*

See I've reflected on that query a few times in my morning prayer time and it came back to me at the most inopportune time! But I took it seriously and considered it. Because of it I changed my mind about some of the things I was going to do because they were beyond what I really needed. And that's it, spiritual formation consists in stopping, reflecting and considering where our lives in Christ fit into the choices we make on a daily basis. This process takes a lifetime and I need all the help I can get.

*C. Wess Daniels, 2006*

1. Minutes of July 20, 2014 Meeting for Business were accepted with no changes.

2. Treasurer's Report - Kathy Beach reported that we are 8 months into the year (67%) and we were in the black for July and August. These positive bottom lines have decreased our year-to-date deficit so that we now have a negative balance of \$4,834 going into the last quarter of the year. We are in a better position than we were last year at this time, which is good news. There have been no major repairs of the Meetinghouse, so this has had a positive impact on our budget. Our year-to-date income is \$33,356 (49% of budget) and our expenses are \$38,188 (56% of budget). The Treasurer's report was approved.

**Quick Summary of Income and Expenses  
Sixth month — 67% of 2014**

Year-to-date Income	\$33,356
Percent of Budget	49%
Year-to-date Expenses	\$38,188
Percent of Budget	56%
Balance	(\$4,834)

3. Financial Oversight reported that Lesley and Ian who run the Betty the eco-Bus event we held in August had been offered a stipend of \$200, plus the Earth and Spirit Committee spent \$42 to cover the cost of posters. \$100 has come from the budget of Earth and Spirit, but the remaining \$100 and the \$42 for posters is still needed. The meeting approved this expenditure and asked Financial Oversight to identify the appropriate line item on the budget to be used to cover it.

4. Ministry and Counsel - Lyn Ballou reported:

- a. Junior Membership of Mabel Peterson
- b. The celebration of several new members will be held on September 28<sup>th</sup>. These members are: Kathy Beach, Kirk Read, Pete Franzen, Nathan Broaddus, Stephanie Richards, Anne Payson, Doug McCeown, Becky Steele, Margie Schoeller and her sons Jackson Schoeller-Perkins and Nate Schoeller-Perkins.
- c. Mid-week worship: Muriel Allen and Kristina MacCormick will be contacts for the opening of the meeting-house for this. The time is 5:30pm-6:30pm every Wednesday, beginning September 10. Cancellations will be posted on the PFM website.
- d. Sunday morning worship met through this summer and was popular and fairly well attended. The facility of visiting the beautiful Quaker Ridge Meeting House was also available through the summer. The lack of child care for summer morning meeting was discussed, and the difficulty this presents for parents of young children wishing to attend this meeting.

- e. Ministry and Counsel continues to discuss the adoption of a particular focus for action by the meeting.
5. Retreat Committee: the all-meeting retreat is scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Notre Dame retreat center in Alfred. The venue was found to be comfortable and convenient last year, allowing for flexibility by those only able to attend part of the retreat. Ministry and Counsel has recommended the use of 'witness' as a theme. The committee is small and needs help from meeting members.
  6. Friends World Committee for Consultation for the Americas update: Kathy Beach reported that 14 people will be coming to visit us for four days from September 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. They have hosts to stay with and most of the money for food will be provided, but we will need help from meeting members for set up and clean up for meals. There will be a potluck meal on the Sunday. Help may be needed on the Sunday for transportation to the airport.
  7. Report from New England Yearly Meeting: Andy Grannell read the following: NEYM Sessions Report To Friends everywhere,  
"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only... James 1:22  
  
New England Yearly Meeting gathered August 2-7, 2014, in beautiful Castleton, Vermont for our 354<sup>th</sup> annual session, around the theme "You are my witnesses." In activities throughout the week, we considered various aspects of the word "witness." To read this wonderfully clear and detailed account please go to web site address: [neym.org/sessions/news/2014-epistle](http://neym.org/sessions/news/2014-epistle).  
  
Approximately 20 Portland Friends were actively engaged in business as members of Permanent Board, i.e., Becky Steele and Elizabeth Szatkowski; in the youth programs, i.e., Brad Bussiere-Nichols and Tom Antonik; in the work of the clerks table, i.e., Andy Grannell; and in leading Anchor Groups, i.e., Dorothy Grannell; Cedar Cushman Levin read the epistle offered by her group of JYMers; and Sophie Szatkowski participated in the opening worship; all in all, Portland Friends were indeed 'witnesses', i.e., they were 'doers of the word and not hearers only'.  
  
Highlights:  
  
\* Second highest number of attenders (over 700) for NEYM Sessions; Castleton College has capacity for another 300 so please plan to join us next year;  
  
\* Detailed planning for this new site and skilled conference management made for a remarkably comfortable and relaxed time;  
  
\* Approximately 55 separate matters were brought before the body for discernment, sharing, and decision – for a fuller and detailed accounting please see minutes when posted; and,  
  
\* The experiment in "pay-as-led" that is pay either the actual costs, the budgeted costs, or pay what you can resulted in generating some \$40,000 in excess of actual costs.
  8. Marion Lundgren needs somebody to take over the responsibility of mailing paper newsletters while her husband H D Wagner recovers from his illness. Heather Denkmire offered to take this on in addition to her work editing the newsletter, and Liz Maier offered to help.
  9. PFM is renewing its earlier minute of support for the work of Arla Patch, who has been working with the Maine Wabanaki-State Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We supported her financially with an award of one of our Leadings Grants. Arla continues with a healing work which uses art and creativity as vehicles to bring individuals to the Light within. She has applied for a second grant to support this work as it enters a more public phase.

10. Updates/Reminders:

- a. September 14 – reconvening 10:15 singing – every Sunday except 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays
- b. September 10 at 9pm is the deadline for newsletter items to be sent to Heather Denkmire.
- c. Tracy Booth's husband, Don, has had a stroke. He is making a remarkable recovery at Maine Medical Center, but Tracy will need our help and support.
- d. September 18-20 – Friends World Committee for Consultation – Section of the Americas will be meeting at Portland Friends Meeting – please sign up to help with set-up or clean-up of various meals at the meetinghouse
- e. September 28 – First Day School begins; New Members Welcome at rise of meeting; Also Adult Ed begins.
- f. October 4 – Ground breaking at new Friends School of Portland in Cumberland, 4pm
- g. October 5 – is World Quaker Day.
- h. October 25 – All Meeting Retreat in Alfred
- i. Adult Religious Education Committee will convene after meeting today.

We finished in silent worship at 10am.

Respectfully submitted

Jenny Doughty, Co-recording clerk



"Peace Rose," Portland Friends Meeting Peace Garden 9/11/14

*"Tell me, what is it  
you plan to do  
with your one wild  
and precious life?"*

*~ Mary Oliver,  
The Summer Day*

### **Spiritual Journeying**

There are openings in a Spiritual Journeying group and the possibility of forming a new group. Please call Kate Potter (761-1648) for information.

These small (four or five women and men, maximum) groups meet monthly and are truly confidential. Three groups have been quietly meeting for many years. We gather to listen deeply to the Holy Spirit and to each other in a structured format so that each person has time to share. The groups are not substitutes for therapy and do not teach theology. But they offer space and time to enter the contemplative stream, strong in so many religions throughout the ages.





An intrepid team led by Tracy Booth and Meg Nobel (Meg made all the original thermal curtains) has repaired the one in the library and created 4 new ones for the parlor, front entry and office. Purchasing them would have cost about \$1000 each. Also on the team Kristina MacCormick, Mary Tracy, and Liz Maier.

*Dear Portland Friends*

*You are a gift to Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas!*

*Thank you for being hosts, providing rides, food, and friendship for the 13 members of the Executive Committee.*

*Join us for a pot luck on Sunday, Sept 21 at rise of meeting for conversation with Friends from across North America.*

*I cannot thank you enough for the love and care you have shown.*

*Dorothy Grannell*



### **"The Humanitarian Case for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons"**

A brief slide show and talk by Drs. Doug Dransfield and Jim Maier will follow Meeting for Worship on Sunday Oct. 5th.

Over 140 countries (but not ours) at a recent international conference are calling for a treaty to ban any use of these weapons, as recent studies show that even a small nuclear exchange will have disastrous global consequences. Learn why the U.S. was not at the table and what can be done to assure that our country joins this crucial dialogue.

For more information see or call Jim Maier 883-5420.

## Grand Start of First Day School! Sunday September 28 10:45 – 11:45 AM

A Fun-Filled Gathering  
for all First Day School Youth!  
Play the popular game "Big Wind Blows!"  
Face Painting! Food!  
Fun songs!

Outdoors if the weather is good  
Otherwise downstairs

Questions? Anne Payson  
[annpayson10@gmail.com](mailto:annpayson10@gmail.com) 781-2501  
After 9/28 First Day School meets  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month

Friends World Committee for Consultation announces . . .



**October 5, 2014**

*Let Your Life Speak:  
Living the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice*

### Join Friends all around the world for a joint day of worship and celebration.

As the sun rises in each area of the world we want to remember that Quakers are worshipping through every time zone, celebrating our deep connections across cultures and Quaker traditions. We are united in love and can accompany each other on this special day. As we worship, let us hold each other in prayer and thanksgiving, and let our hymns of praise resound across the world.

#### Friends can:

- Use shared worship resources that will be used by other churches and meetings.
- Plan an activity that connects the church or meeting with other Friends.
- Support Friends worldwide by contributing to FWCC: any collection given to the Section marked WQD will be shared between the Section and the World Office.
- Share the day's activities by sending a documentation of what you have done to [harrya@friendsworldoffice.org](mailto:harrya@friendsworldoffice.org), then see what others have done on [www.worldquakerday.org](http://www.worldquakerday.org). Also find us on the FWCC World Office Facebook page or on Twitter #wqd.

**Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, Changing Lives**  
[www.fwccworld.org](http://www.fwccworld.org)



Africa Section  
[www.fwccafrica.org](http://www.fwccafrica.org)



Europe & Middle East Section  
[www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org)



Asia West Pacific Section  
[www.fwccawps.org](http://www.fwccawps.org)



Section of the Americas  
[www.fwccamericas.org](http://www.fwccamericas.org)

*"Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return..."*

Thomas R. Kelly. "A Testament of Devotion"



### Empowerment of Women in Uganda and Tanzania Thursday, October 16th, 2014 Portland Friends Meeting

6:00 — Potluck supper. African music and an exhibit of African arts and crafts. (Please bring food to share with others who are attending)

7pm — Empowerment of Women in Uganda and Tanzania Yearly Meetings

Marian Baker, a recorded minister from Weare, NH Friends Meeting will share using a powerpoint presentation, telling stories, and with music about the grassroots ministry happening in Uganda and Tanzania with Quaker women pastors from Kenya that is empowering rural women in exciting ways. She travels under a minute from Weare MM endorsed by Dover Quarterly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting. She will also have artwork/crafts from Africa for sale to support the women's work. A great opportunity to broaden our understanding of other Friends and of other ministries happening in East Africa!

## Member Profile: Stephanie A. Richards

I grew up in Portland, Maine attending St. Peter's Episcopal church with my family. I went to Deering High School, then Bates College. I attended Harvard University and the University of Vermont for my graduate work, and currently I teach biology at Bates. I love spending time with my family, working in our yard and doing home improvement projects, reading, and baking (especially pie!).



I first attended Quaker meeting in Lewiston, Maine when Tony and I were visiting Anne Thompson, a professor and friend at Bates. I think it was the longest hour of my life...growing up in a small house with four other siblings, silence was not something I had experienced much. I didn't consider Quaker Meeting as a spiritual practice until after we married and moved to Vermont. We began to attend Burlington Friends Meeting, and on our first visit I had a very powerful experience of the spirit, even if I didn't know how to describe it at the time. I attended occasionally, but was busy with graduate school and so it wasn't my regular practice. When we moved back to Portland many years later, I began to attend Portland Friends and found my spiritual place here.

When I first began to attend Portland Friends, I knew it was where I needed to be, but I was kind of shy about meeting people. Joining the Youth Religious Education Committee allowed me to get to know people so much better, and I still feel close to many of those people. I have been on other committees since, and I love using different skills and being gently challenged while working with people in this community. I would encourage any newcomer to join a committee! I also drove Hal Burnham to Meeting in winter for a short while. I loved the time I spent with Hal on these trips and we realized that we had a lot of history in common, including that he was at Deering High School with my uncle. I am deeply grateful for that experience with Hal which was a major trigger for my decision to become a member of PFM.

What might surprise you is that I wrote my membership letter for Portland Friends Meeting about seven years before I submitted it. While I knew I wanted to be a member, I guess I wasn't ready until recently. I loved the thoughtful way the clearness committee process allowed me to work on articulating what this faith and this community means to me, and the way it nudged me to tell my spiritual story. It was a profoundly moving process for me, and I'm so happy I went through it.

### Wiping the Slate Clean!

Once again it's time for a fall clean-up of our meeting house calendar! I am wiping the slate clean of all calendar entries.

If you plan to use the meeting house for a meeting, event, etc., any time between now and June, please reserve time and space on our calendar. To do so:

- A. Check for availability on our online calendar at [www.Portlandfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.Portlandfriendsmeeting.org)
- B. Determine the specific spaces/s, date/s and time block/s that you wish to reserve
- C. Email me all of these details, and a description of the event (for posting online); please appreciate that a "reservation" is not possible without each of these details.
- D. I'll confirm with you via email

Please use this process for any meeting house use....committee meetings, spiritual direction groups, one-time events, etc.

Thanks very much,

Jane Mullen  
[Jmmaine@aol.com](mailto:Jmmaine@aol.com)



Dear Friends,

As most of you know, Sue Calhoun's husband Jack Cole is still recovering from a massive stroke that he suffered on June 2nd. His rehabilitation is progressing well, and at this point he can have brief outings with Sue. However, it will still be some time before he can come home. One way that PFM can help Sue is by making meals for her. She works from 9-5 and then usually visits Jack, so she may return home as late as 8 pm.

I have extended the Doodle calendar through September (every other day). You can access it at: <http://doodle.com/c9fuy5t7dia7bqdt> You can sign up there to bring her meals on a day or days that are convenient for you. You could bring food before 8:30 am or in the early evening. Meals can be put in the bag hung on the front doorknob inside the storm door. Please also use an ice pack to keep the food cool. All washed containers and ice packs will be put in a tote on the porch for you to retrieve. I am re-posting the food guidelines here for your convenience:

Keep it simple: plain baked or boiled potato or sweet potato; lightly steamed green beans or broccoli, or sauteed onions and peppers; a protein; fruit is good, too.

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Steamed or sauteed veggies	Canola oil
Organic potatoes, other foods not as important	Low fat foods
Meat: chicken, pork, fish, beef	Flour
Soups	Shellfish
Cabbage family veggies	Margarine
Corn, summer squash, zucchini	Pasta, bread, grains
Butter, dairy, eggs	Dried beans dishes
	Beets, chard or spinach
	Sugar or artificial sweeteners
	Tofu, soy milk, soybean oil (miso soup/soy sauce okay)

One last thing: if you have questions, please do not call Sue. She is overwhelmed enough already, and we want to make this as simple and non-stressful for her as possible. You can call me with questions at 774-2578.

In the Light,

Shannon O'Connor



**Community-Wide Groundbreaking Celebration**  
for the new Friends School of Portland, 10:30am  
on Saturday, October 4

Please join us for this special event for Friends School families and friends!

**Parenting for Peace  
Envisioning a Sustainable Future:  
A Discussion with Three Maine Visionaries**

October 15, 2014 • 7:00 pm

Friends School of Portland; Free and Open to  
the Public

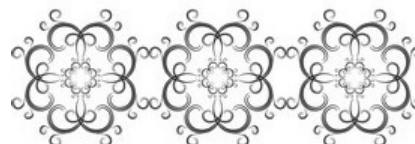
Seth Silverton, *Founder of The Woodchop School:*

Community organizer and creator of place-based relationships, Brooklyn Friends School graduate

Naomi Beal, *Director of PassivhausMAINE:*  
Advocate for reducing the carbon footprint of  
our built environment, Earlham College graduate

Stacy Brenner, *Owner of Broadturn Farm:*  
Expert in community-centered organic farming  
and farmland preservation, George School  
graduate

For more info visit  
[www.friendsschoolofportland.org](http://www.friendsschoolofportland.org)





**A Rare and Special Opportunity  
Oct 1st at Bates College**

Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare  
Truth & Reconciliation  
Commission



The two core architects of the Maine Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Passamaquoddy tribal members, Denise Altvater and Esther Attean will be appearing at Bates College in the Harward Center sponsored Civic Forum Series. They will be joined by Friend Arla Patch and artist and historian Robert Shetterly of the Americans Who Tell the Truth project. Robert will be sharing the paintings he did of Esther and Denise and Arla will be sharing the history and context for this TRC. Esther and Denise will speak of the work of the Commission to date and talk about visions and hopes for the future.

**Wednesday, October 1 — 7:30- 9:00 pm — Olin Arts Auditorium, Bates College**

Greetings, Friends,

Please consider volunteering some time at the Quaker booth in the Social and Political Action area at the Common Ground Country Fair, Sept 19-21. Any time is welcome, but those who could put in a few hours on Saturday or Sunday could get a free pass to enter the Fair that day. Contact: [mainerains@gmail.com](mailto:mainerains@gmail.com) Mark Rains, 101 Town House Rd, Vienna, ME 04360 or 293-3967. The booth is hosted by Vassalboro Qtr, but Friends from all over Maine (and NEYM) are invited to join us.

We had a great experience last year, with a focus both on Friends' testimonies and on the spiritual roots and nurturance of our faith and practice. SPICES (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality) blended tastefully with the Fair's focus on food production. The Quaker Institute for the Future (inspired) book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, provided five queries for engaging people and listening creatively in discussion about a variety of steps to "allow the economy to nourish and preserve the community of life on earth, instead of working toward its destruction."

What is the economy for? (this could be applied at a variety of levels from local community to planet Earth)

1. How does it work?
2. How big should it be?
3. What is a fair distribution of its benefits and burdens?
4. How should it be governed?

(Copies of the book will be available to read in the booth.)

A banner illustrated a map of Maine and all the Meetings and worship groups across the state, as well as projects Friends are involved in, such as the AFSC Wabanaki Project, Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy, Friends School, Ramallah Scholarship project, Kakamega orphanage support, etc.

We'll be repeating all of the above this year, plus more up to date information about the Tribal/Maine DHHS Truth and Reconciliation process, Clean Election Initiative, etc. plus whatever your meeting is doing that you would like to share--Please send any resources, brochures, news clippings, etc. you would like to see included (either URLs or hard copies) to: [mainerains@gmail.com](mailto:mainerains@gmail.com) Mark Rains, 101 Town House Rd, Vienna, ME 04360

Check the [MOFGA.org](http://mofga.org) Fair schedule for workshops you might like to attend, e.g.a few of the speakers I know include restorative justice, Maine Citizens' Climate Lobby, etc. <http://mofga.org/TheFair/ScheduleofEvents/tabid/106/Default.aspx>

In Friendship,  
Mark Rains  
Clerk, Farmington MM

## A message from Arthur Fink

Many of you know that I spent a week in January at the concentration camps in Auschwitz and Birkenau. I'm seeking opportunities to speak about this or conduct workshops with school and community groups — junior high school, high school, or college classes, community groups such as Rotary, churches, synagogues, other Quaker meetings, etc. It could be just me, or with the cellist Robin Jellis. Here's a video of the two of us presenting at Pecha Kucha Portland, where the format is 20 slides that get shown for a fixed timing of 20 seconds each. <http://vimeo.com/91339833>

I've also a huge set of images taken during this trip. The images of the trees of Auschwitz are among the most powerful.



Visit my studio / gallery any time. I'm at 145 Newbury Street (just across the street from Coffee by Design on India Street), in a former synagogue, on the 2nd floor. I have over 100 framed prints hanging — dancers, dancing with horses, some travel images, and more. All are for sale, and the proceeds support a lot of my pro bono work.

Also, please think of me, and suggest me to others, when there's a need for documentary photography. Although best known for photographing dance performance and rehearsal / classes, I also tell visual stories about weddings, other social gatherings, conferences, workshops, . . . you name it.

Arthur Fink 615-5722

## NEYM Sessions Report

To Friends everywhere,

*"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only..."*  
James 1:22

New England Yearly Meeting gathered August 2-7, 2014, in beautiful Castleton, Vermont for our 354<sup>th</sup> annual session, around the theme "You are my witnesses." In activities throughout the week, we considered various aspects of the word "witness." To read this wonderfully clear and detailed account please go to web site address: <neym.org/sessions/news/2014-epistle>.

Approximately 20 Portland Friends were actively engaged in business as members of Permanent Board, i.e., Becky Steele and Elizabeth Szatkowski; in the youth programs, i.e., Brad Bussiere-Nichols and Tom Antonik; in the work of the clerks table, i.e., Andy Grannell; and in leading Anchor Groups, i.e., Dorothy Grannell; Cedar Cushman Levin read the epistle offered by her group of JYMers; and Sophie Szatkowski participated in the opening worship; all in all, Portland Friends were indeed 'witnesses', i.e., they were 'doers of the word and not hearers only'.

Highlights:

Second highest number of attenders (over 700) for NEYM Sessions; Castleton College has capacity for another 300 so please plan to join us next year;

Detailed planning for this new site and skilled conference management made for a remarkably comfortable and relaxed time;

Approximately 55 separate matters were brought before the body for discernment, sharing, and decision – for a fuller and detailed accounting please see minutes when posted; and

The experiment in "pay-as-led" that is pay either the actual costs, the budgeted costs, or pay what you can resulted in generating some \$40,000 in excess of actual costs.

## The Obligation to Assist

by Pete Franzen

If a small child were drowning in a shallow pond right in front of you, would you muddy a nice pair of slacks to save her? This is the beginning of an ethical argument known as “the obligation to assist”, outlined by ethical philosopher Peter Singer in his 1979 book, *Practical Ethics*. Singer believes that the situation above is uncontroversial because “If it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening without sacrificing something of comparable moral significance, we ought to do it”.

The problem, he argues, is that affluent people do not logically extend this basic ethical principle to everyday situations in which we can assist those living in poverty. Affluent people can dispose of income or resources in order to assist those living in poverty (without food, shelter, or proper healthcare) without giving up anything of comparable significance. Therefore, we ought to do it, and our obligation to assist should be no less strong than the obligation to assist someone who is suffering right in front of us.

How much we give up depends on what we consider to be of comparable significance. Vacations, cars, large houses, multiple houses, private education, expensive food, stylish clothing, and the latest technology are all luxuries that are commonplace to many of us who do not even think of ourselves as “well-to-do”.

If we give up some luxuries so other people can have necessities, will our personal contribution make any noticeable impression on world poverty as a whole? Of course not! But it is ANY poverty at all, not just ALL poverty, that is bad. It is not our jobs to end all poverty, but it is our obligation to prevent some, especially when it comes at no comparable sacrifice to ourselves.

Additional queries about affluence:

- Does wealth belong to the individual or to the community?
- What is our testimony of simplicity?
- What is luxury?
- What is necessity?

*I was inspired to write this brief summary of an ethical argument that I find very powerful and relevant to our meeting, quaker testimony of simplicity, and current issues in Portland, ME. —PF*



Are you wishing you could go to New York on September 21<sup>st</sup> for the People’s Climate Parade? No money, no time? Well here is the next best thing: Maine 350 and other interested people have put together a People’s Climate Parade in Auburn, Maine beginning at the Festival Plaza. Parade and march starts at 1 pm and will end by 3 pm. Bring a banner, join the flock of cardboard penguins or create your own threatened animal of piece of earth and join in. Call 777-1980 for more information. Show your support for our Mother Earth and join the parade – try to car pool please.



Portland Friends Meeting  
1837 Forest Ave  
Portland, ME 04103

Address Service Requested



**Next newsletter deadline:**  
Wednesday, October 8th, 9pm

submissions: [pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net](mailto:pfmnewsletter@grantwinners.net)